

Justice George Carlson to be honored by MSU

March 21, 2012

Supreme Court Presiding Justice George C. Carlson Jr. of Batesville is the recipient of Mississippi State University's Distinguished Jurist Award for 2012.

The Mississippi State Pre-Law Society will present the award during a noon luncheon Thursday, March 29, at the Hunter Henry Center on the MSU campus. Presiding Justice Carlson will deliver a lecture to students and guests. Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. also will speak.

The annual award, established in 1977, recognizes lawyers and judges who have made significant contributions to jurisprudence. Among the previous recipients of the award are former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, former U.S. Attorneys General Griffin Bell and Edward Levi, former CIA Director William Webster, and Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox. Other Mississippi Supreme Court justices who have received the award are Chief Justices Neville Patterson, Lenore Prather, Edwin Lloyd Pittman and Bill Waller Jr. Supreme Court Justice Leslie D. King received the award when he was Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals.

Presiding Justice Carlson and Chief Justice Waller are MSU alumni.

Presiding Justice Carlson said, "When I look down the list of previous recipients of this award, I am truly humbled. This state is blessed with trial and appellate judges who possess extraordinary talent and a genuine desire to serve our citizens as they exhibit true allegiance to fair application of the law. To return to my alma mater to receive this prestigious award is, without question, a highlight in my career. My family and I look forward to this special occasion for us on the Mississippi State campus."

Chief Justice Waller said, "Presiding Justice Carlson is one of the finest justices to have ever served on this Court. First and foremost he is tireless and totally committed to the public trust. No one works harder on the job or lives a more exemplary life than Presiding Justice Carlson. He possesses a unique vision and understanding of the law. His power of articulation is great, and provides the bench, bar, and public with understandable, logical and useful jurisprudence."

Gov. Ronnie Musgrove appointed Justice Carlson to a vacancy on the Supreme Court effective Nov. 1, 2001. He has announced that he will retire in January 2013, at the end of his term. He previously served for 19 years as a circuit judge for the 17th Circuit District of DeSoto, Panola, Tallahatchie, Tate and Yalobusha counties.

He has served on the Supreme Court's Rules Committee since he first joined the court. He is chair of the Supreme Court Rules Committee on Civil Practice and Procedure. He is chair of the Mississippi Model Jury Instructions Commission, which is conducting a comprehensive examination of jury instructions used in state courts and formulating recommendations to the Supreme Court. As the second longest currently serving member of the Supreme Court, he is a presiding justice. He is a member of the court's Executive Committee. He also held leadership roles as a trial judge. He served as vice-chair of the

Mississippi Circuit Judges Conference in 1998-1999, and chair of the Conference in 1999-2000.

Justice Carlson served as a member on the Governor's Criminal Justice Task Force in 1991, and as a member of the Commission on the Courts in the 21st Century 1992-1993. He served as a member of the Professionalism Committee of the Mississippi Bar 1998-1999, and as a member of the Law School Professionalism Program Task Force 1998-1999.

Justice Carlson is a member and past president of the Panola County Bar Association, and a member and past president of the William C. Keady American Inns of Court. He is a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation. He is a member of the American Bar Association, the American Judges Association, the Mississippi Bar, and the Lamar Order of the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Justice Carlson is a 1964 graduate of South Panola High School. Outside the court, he is probably best known as the radio play-by-play announcer for the South Panola Tigers.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Mississippi State University in 1969, and a law degree from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1972. Justice Carlson graduated from the National Judicial College, University of Nevada, Reno, in October 1982.

He is an elder in the Batesville Presbyterian Church. He is married to Jane Ivy Russel Carlson. They have two children and three grandchildren.

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